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Report of the Five-State Meeting on Suburban 4-H Club Work

New York City

March 30-31, 1955

STATES PARTICIPATING: New York

New Jersey

Delaware

Pennsylvania

Maryland



U.S.
Federal Extension Service

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREWORD

The percentage of farmers in our total population is decreasing. There has been a likewise increase in the percentage of 4-H Club members who live in rural nonfarm and suburban homes. These existing conditions warranted the reexamining of our 4-H Club program with the view of increasing its total effectiveness.

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PROGRAM

Conference on
Strengthening Suburban 4-H Club Work
Barbizon-Plaza Hotel
New York City
March 30-31, 1955

Wednesday, March 30

9:30 a.m. Allen Baker, Pa., presiding
Program chairman

Who We Are. Mylo S. Downey, USDA

Why We Are Here Martha Leighton, N.Y.

Helping 4-H is Our Purpose. A. L. Jones
The Sears-Roebuck Foundation

Some Facts on the Suburban
Situation (A Panel) R. P. Winters, N.J.
Merle Howes, Md.
Tena Bishop, USDA

The Situation As We See It
at Home (Discussion)

12 noon Lunch

1:30 p.m. Albert Hoefer, N.Y., presiding

The Hurdles to be Overcome
(Defining the problem)
Workshop discussion groups
Group Leaders Peter Martens, N.J.
Isabel B. Smith, Pa.
Maurice Field, Del.

3 p.m. These Are the Problems
(A report of workshop groups)

3:40 p.m. One Way We Are Trying to Solve
A Suburban Area Problem
(A demonstration or explana-
tion by each State)

5 p.m. Adjournment

Thursday, March 31

9 a.m.	Samuel M. Gwinn, Del., presiding
	Eliminating the Road Blocks (Recommending Solutions)
	Workshop discussion groups
	Group Leaders John Stookey, N.J. Elsie Trabert, Pa. Robert Miller, Md.
11 a.m.	Report of work groups
12 noon	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Allen Baker, Pa., presiding
	Recommendations for the Future
	Group discussions by States followed by reports
2:45 p.m.	Tieing Loose Ends Mylo S. Downey, USDA
3 p.m.	Adjournment

Program Committee

Allen Baker, Pa., Chairman
Martha Leighton, N.Y.
Rollyn P. Winters, N.J.
Merle Howes, Md.
Mylo S. Downey, USDA

Exhibit Committee

Dorothy Flint, N.Y.
Leonard Williams, N.J.
Imogene Romino, Md.

Report Committee

Martha Leighton, N.Y.
Merle Howes, Md.
Mylo S. Downey, USDA

Why Are We Here

by Martha Leighton, N. Y.

4-H Club work was organized and financed as a program for the farm boy and girl. Through the years of growth and success of the program we have adhered to most of the original basic principles. In more recent years the program has had a large increase in the rural nonfarm areas. Requests from these areas have been met within the limits of existing personnel.

We still recognize that our first obligation is to the farm boy and girl. Extension directors, State 4-H Club leaders and agents considered this phase of extension work at a regional conference about a year ago. Today we pause to look at the scope and type of programs now being conducted in suburban areas. We are here to take a further look at the suburban 4-H Club program in the Northeast, exchange experiences, methods, literature and general know how. During these two days we hope we may share experiences and find answers to some questions. As local club leaders and 4-H Club agents working with suburban 4-H Club programs -

1. What are some of the problems we have found which are different from those of working with rural programs?
2. What are some of the methods we have used to meet these problems?
3. What types of projects have seemed to bring the greatest satisfaction and best meet the needs of the club members?
4. What would help us most to improve this phase of our program?

Resume of Facts Presented at Former Conferences
to Consider 4-H Club Work in the Suburban Areas

by Rollyn P. Winters, N. J.

One of the important contributions to our thinking was made by Dr. M. E. John, Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Pennsylvania State University, in his presentation to the directors of extension and State 4-H Club leaders about a year ago. He discussed some of the implications of 4-H Club work in fringe (suburban) areas. He pointed out changes which are occurring in our population. In the Northeast, we now have 5.4 per cent of our population recorded as rural farm. In this same area, 23 per cent is rural nonfarm. During the last 10 years there has been a decrease of 23 per cent in our rural farm population in the Northeastern part of the United States.

Attention was also directed to other population changes which are occurring. School consolidation is bringing the rural and urban youth closer together. They are becoming more closely associated. This has a tendency to make youth in the rural area of a more heterogeneous nature than formerly when rural areas were more isolated.

It is important that we bear in mind that the truly rural family has quite a definite set of goals and a definite system of values. Suburban families' goals and values systems are more indistinguishable to us. There is a bit more uncertainty in the role that suburban youth play.

Studies show that suburban parents tend to join organizations in which material values carry considerable weight. Thus, organizations become stratified according to members' level of education and type of occupation. Children observe this tendency and follow the example set by parents.

Further studies have indicated that the task of leadership in the suburban areas is complicated. People have varied interests, backgrounds, occupations, and incomes.

From our past discussion of the suburban situation, it had been generally agreed that in approaching 4-H Club work in these areas, we give serious thought to definite requirements and standards so that 4-H Club projects would continue to be meaningful. It is quite likely that short-term projects will be more attractive.

As we approach 4-H Club work in suburban areas, we must realize that we will have to work with large numbers of people. For example, in the five States represented at this conference, we find approximately 33 million people who should have an understanding of the Extension program, its needs, and educational possibilities. We have, in previous discussions, fully realized that there are many questions and perhaps problems facing us as to how 4-H Club work could best be adapted to suburban areas. Some of these are: necessary tools and materials to do the job, locating and training suitable leadership and establishing a pattern for local advisory and sponsoring groups.

What the 1950 Census Means To Us

by Tena Bishop, USDA

The following excerpts taken from a paper presented by Helen G. Hurd, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., have implications for 4-H Club programs. Her paper was presented before the Extension Section Division of Home Economics, Land-Grant College Association meeting, Washington, D.C. December 1954.

The 1950 Census indicates significant changes in American life and that Extension programs should be reviewed in light of these changes. We have been counting ourselves every ten years since 1790 and each new census has added its evidence to the change that has come about in America.

When the first census was taken in 1790, there were about five persons per square mile in the country and about 95 per cent of the people lived on farms. Today the average density is about 50 persons per square mile and over half the rural population lives within an hour's automobile ride of a city of 100,000 or more. The country is 64 per cent urban, with urban characteristics permeating the countryside. Of the 36 per cent rural, only 15.3 per cent actually live on farms. The other 20.7 per cent is characterized as rural nonfarm. The new definition in 1950 took away about 9 per cent from the farm population.

The population as a whole increased 14.5 per cent from 1940-1950. There was an increase of 13.2 per cent in the rural nonfarm population and a decrease of 23.6 per cent in the farm population. The rural nonfarm population includes persons living outside urban areas who do not live on farms, such as isolated nonfarm homes in the open country, villages and hamlets of less than 2,500 inhabitants, and some of the fringe areas surrounding unincorporated places. Urban place refers to a concentration of population of 2,500 or more.

Some States are more urbanized than others. New Jersey, for example, is the most urban State in the Nation, being 86.6 per cent urban followed closely by all the Northeastern States.

Family life has changed also. Families are smaller--the average is 3.6 persons for the United States. The small family living apart as a separate unit is a consuming unit while families of the past were producing units and it is a group in which quality is becoming more important than quantity. As the family becomes smaller in size, the relationships among the members become limited to fewer people and are thus intensified.

The hand down technique from parents to children is not enough these days. People need help in attaining greater satisfactions in life and in developing richer personalities.

The recent upward trend in births indicates that we have a larger number of boys and girls in the total population than ever before for potential 4-H members.

A Few Examples of How States Are Meeting the Needs in the Nonfarm Community

- Excerpts of Brief Reports by States -

Delaware

Delaware finds that home beautification is one of the more popular project programs in suburban areas. They are finding an increasing number of boys interested in the regular home improvement project.

Maryland

A local club in a suburban area has organized a board of directors of parents. This group has been extremely helpful in mobilizing the resources of the community and the conduct of an interested club program. The suburban clubs have been most successful with small work units that may be completed in a short period of time. A group of older 4-H Club members has developed a Consumer Education and Vocational Exploration Program, usually carried out in three or four meetings on one subject.

New Jersey

A new project has been developed entitled, "Beautifying Your Home With Plants." This involves construction of flats, making plantings, care of cuttings, transplanting and care of shrubbery.

New York

New York representative reported 4-H Bicycle Safety Program. This activity is a special program conducted through the schools. It has full support of the school of administrators and parent teachers associations. It emphasizes bicycle safety practices, care and repair of the bicycle. Certain recognitions are provided to the boys and girls who complete the program. This work through the school has great public relations value for 4-H Club work.

Pennsylvania

We see an opportunity for 4-H Clubs to conduct activities and projects that will help strengthen the bond of understanding between suburban and city youth, and between privileged and underprivileged youth. Example: 4-H Club group grew flats of flower plants and gave them to boys and girls in the city. The 4-H Club members went to the city and demonstrated preparation of the soil and planting.

Work Group Reports

Group I: Some Problems Associated With the Opportunities of 4-H Club Work in Suburban Areas

1. Recognizing and understanding the needs of the suburban boys and girls.
2. Having suitable materials that relate to projects and activities that can be conducted satisfactorily in suburban areas.
3. Getting rid of the strictly rural connotation.
4. Training extension workers to understand and appreciate the rural nonfarm opportunities of 4-H Club work.
5. Developing a specialized training program for local leaders in suburban areas.
6. Challenging project requirements and suitable records.
7. Utilizing suburban people to help plan a 4-H program.
8. The development of short-term projects.
9. Having a recognition program that will motivate boys and girls in suburban areas and still be in proper relationship with the total 4-H recognition plan.
10. Having adequate finances to provide the necessary personnel to do an expanded 4-H program in suburban areas.
11. Publicity that would give added prestige to the program.

Group II: Projects and Activities Adaptable to the Nonfarm Situation

1. Standard Homemaking
 - a. Clothing
 - b. Food preparation
 - c. Food preservation
 - d. Child care
 - e. Home improvement
 - f. Home management
2. Producing cut flowers
3. Home Grounds Beautification
 - a. Lawn care
 - b. Shrub propagation
 - c. Foundation plantings
 - d. Flowers for grounds beautification
 - e. Grounds cleanup
 - f. Indoor gardening
 - g. Garden accessories

4. Forestry
 - a. Trees from seed
 - b. Tree identification
5. Woodwork
6. Electricity
7. Entomology
8. Bicycle maintenance
9. Bird study
10. Home repairs
11. Public speaking
12. Junior leadership
13. Vegetable garden and small fruits
14. Water and soil conservation
15. Rabbits
16. Poultry
17. Citizenship
18. Auto mechanics
19. Wild flowers, ferns, etc.
20. Wildlife
21. Health
22. Safety in all aspects (water, fire, firearms, etc.)
23. Arts and crafts
24. Bees
25. Recreation (active)
26. Demonstration work as a project
27. Journalism and news writing
28. Outdoor living (camping)

Additional Recommendations

The present material must be revised and adapted to suburban areas, both for leaders and members. There should be a definite cooperation in exchange of project materials among States. Suggest a central clearing house to accumulate a bibliography and library of project and activity materials available throughout Northeast, or Nation. Bibliography should be made available to all States.

Teaching Aids and Resources Necessary for Constructing a 4-H Club Program

1. Types of teaching materials now used in the regular 4-H Club program.
2. Materials designed to aid with special projects conducted by suburban members.
3. Recommend utilizing the help of such groups as governmental agencies, garden clubs, rifle associations, etc.
4. Intercounty visits, home visits, and field trips.
5. Urge the States' cooperation in the preparation of suitable project materials.
6. Awards available for suburban programs should be revised to give all members comparable opportunities.
7. It is important that extension personnel working in suburban areas have the necessary type of training for their job.

Group III: Finding, Training, and Utilizing Leaders and Sponsors for Suburban 4-H Club Program

1. Finding Leadership -

Contact and acquaint community organizations with need and requirements of 4-H leadership.

- a. Adult and 4-H Extension advisory groups
- b. Churches
- c. P.T.A. - schools
- d. Service Clubs - youth and agricultural committee
- e. Veteran organizations

Qualification of 4-H leadership in suburban areas

- a. Consider organizing ability of key 4-H leader (let local group suggest this person)

- b. Use multiple leadership for a given club. Example: project leaders, activities leader, recreation exhibit leaders
 - (1) Organization leader works out need for assisting leadership
 - (2) Short term leadership needed in suburban areas
- 2. Training Leadership
 - a. New leader training--emphasize 4-H philosophy (strongly recommend all new leaders attend)
 - b. Make such training specific
 - (1) How to teach; teaching techniques
 - (2) Include leader guide which shows and tells how to do
 - (3) Understanding youth interests and how to handle
 - (4) Extension background and philosophy
 - (5) 4-H and Extension - terminology
 - (6) Why we have projects - place of 4-H records
 - (7) Consider local leader training on district basis within county
 - (8) Improve our methods for presenting information to leaders
 - (9) Emphasize dignity of responsible leadership
 - (10) Try not to overload new leaders - give materials to leaders in an organized manner
- 3. Sponsoring and Utilization of Leadership
 - a. If using local sponsorship system, organize responsibilities for sponsoring group
 - (1) Supplying leadership
 - (2) Transportation
 - (3) Meeting places
 - (4) Recognition
 - b. Parent understanding of project requirements - meet with parents to develop this familiarity of 4-H needs
 - c. Use and develop leadership as we find it

Some Things We See in Suburban 4-H Club Work

- As reported by States at conclusion of conference

Pennsylvania

Urban work growing rapidly. New projects are needed for boys that do not live on farms and also an adaptation of projects we already have such as gardens, small fruit, etc. Adapt our material to fit younger club members. We are apt to get younger boys and girls up to a certain age in separate clubs but older boys and girls like to be in clubs together.

Show and Sell - emphasis should still be placed on agricultural and home economics projects. Make our county personnel (men) more aware of the urban boy--closer working relationship among county personnel.

Leaders do their best job when teaching subjects they know. We need promotional leaflets to inform urban people about 4-H. Mr. Wentz, our 4-H leader, says: "4-H is something green." When we're green we grow and we hope to grow in suburban 4-H Club work.

Delaware

We look to the future. Strictly urban area will not be considered at this time. We will continue to examine our present program and make necessary adaptations to meet the needs of the rapidly shifting population. Our program will continue with a relation to agriculture but the usual reference to farm will be gradually eliminated. We look to other States for ideas and materials and share any that we develop.

We realize we have to do an expanded job with present State and county personnel, therefore we must rely heavily on lay leadership and sponsoring group to carry on this work. It is expected we will have some new 4-H sponsors as service clubs, P.T.A.'s, and church organizations.

New York

How do these things apply to us?

Nothing radically new - same techniques, except "rural or farm" literature - project and club organizations
"Good" training - agent and local leader
leader recruitment

With slight adaptions - present literature largely suitable (agr.)
more aware of materials available in other States.

Believe in basic principles -

Club organization - planned year round programs
local leaders and training

The project idea - with "learning by doing" concept
with certain useful work requirements and results
with member participation in demonstrations
with earned awards and suitable recognition

Extension cannot do all things for all people.

Other organizations operating
Maintain good public relations

First obligation of the Extension Service is to farm youth; however, we must meet urban demands so far as possible.

New Jersey

1. We will not go home and sell suburban club work but be ready for it as it develops.
 - a. Meet with agents to give them benefit of this meeting
 - b. Present to agents full opportunities for sponsorship
2. Subject matter additions
 - a. Trees from seed
 - b. Lawns
 - c. House plants
 - d. Shrubs around the home
3. Recommend that all States within our region supply Federal office with supporting material before printing for coordination with other States.
4. Recommend that outside sponsor be found to subsidize field agent or specialist (4-H know how) to take leave to specifically develop suburban project material.

Maryland

Our first responsibility is to more adequately serve the needs of the boys and girls of the rural nonfarm areas. We must continue to emphasize the project as an important phase of 4-H Club work.

We recommend procedures be set up to enable interested States to review and exchange suburban 4-H Club materials prepared by other States.

A Few Kernels Among the Chaff

as summarized by Mylo S. Downey, USDA

1. We are not promoting the expansion of 4-H Club work in suburban areas. Good Extension procedure dictates the necessity of evaluating our present program in relation to the trend of the times and be of service to people where we find them.
2. The records show that an increasing volume of our 4-H Club work is with nonfarm boys and girls. Nearly 50% of the 4-H Club enrollment of the States represented in this conference are from nonfarm homes.
3. All States are making adjustments in their 4-H program, some more rapidly than others. All States have some 4-H Club materials to support the program in rural nonfarm and suburban areas.
4. There is a sincere desire by all States to cooperate and share in the production of literature.
5. Leadership and sponsorship is available; however, it lacks a background of understanding for 4-H Club work.
6. The basic features of club work--the project, the demonstration, the exhibit, the club meetings--must always be maintained.
7. "We must not violate our original premise, but improve our service to other people." -- by Phil Alampi, Farm Program Director, WNBC, New York.
8. "We should realize the importance of definite projects and a definite program as we consider extending 4-H Club work in suburban areas. We should develop an organized plan to exchange literature among States. We must not attempt to assume responsibility for something others can do better. Example: Y.M.C.A., Little League, etc." Director Lindley Cook, New Jersey.

Statistics on 4-H Club Enrollment - 1954

STATE	TOTAL				FARM				RURAL NONFARM				URBAN			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Percent	Percent
Delaware	1,503	682	821	1,36	474	60.5	194	269	30.8	52	78	8.7				
Maryland	14,483	6,591	7,892	4,670	3,280	54.9	1,626	3,401	34.7	295	1,211	10.4				
New Jersey	11,083	4,668	6,415	2,141	1,836	35.9	1,819	3,082	44.2	708	1,497	19.9				
New York	55,998	26,921	29,077	13,348	20,611	42.8	8,161	11,622	35.3	5,412	6,844	21.9				
Pennsylvania	31,950	10,033	21,917	7,655	10,243	56.0	2,067	8,556	33.3	311	3,118	10.7				



